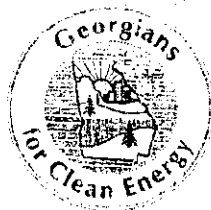


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The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20585
(Fax) 202-586-4403

550049

September 4, 2001

Dear Secretary Abraham:

Georgians for Clean Energy hereby objects to the Department of Energy's (DOE) lack of widespread, nationwide public notification of hearings concerning the recommendation of Yucca Mountain to hold a portion of the legacy of deadly, radioactive waste from weapons production and related commercial nuclear power plants. As we understand how this process transpired, we are also concerned that the Fifth Amendment may have been violated.

This is a momentous decision that requires the DOE to advertise in all leading newspapers nationwide, along with minor newspapers located along the transportation route. In such an advertisement, the DOE should admit that the only thing it has been charged with is to isolate some of this waste for 10,000 years—which represents a miniscule portion of the wastes' full radioactive lethality. At the end of this 10,000-year period, the waste will still be hazardous to the health of humans and the environment and will breach any containment. Additionally, the DOE should admit to the fact that a situation has been created where this same dangerous material that the agency would like to isolate from the public under a mountain in an earthquake zone, is currently at DOE sites and nuclear power plants around the nation. If it is left onsite, the DOE must admit, that the nuclear waste must be re-containerized approximately every 40 years for essentially eternity. Furthermore, the DOE should admit that Yucca Mountain would not be able to hold our nation's entire military and commercial nuclear waste legacy. The advertisement should tell the public where this second geologic repository is being considered.

Transportation also presents serious environmental and health consequences in case of accidents or malfeasance. Rail beds and truck corridors nationwide would need massive upgrading in order to ensure safer shipments. Shipping casks would also need additional shielding in order to increase safety. Where is the money for these upgrades going to come from? These are the sort of questions the nation should be addressing and understanding, not just the State of Nevada. The nation's collective tax dollars have funded this situation for over fifty years with or without the public's permission. It is time for public hearings to be held in all states. Four hearings per state should be held—one within the capital city and then the remaining geographic regions not represented by the capital—northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest, for instance.

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Georgians for Clean Energy requests that the DOE hold the proper hearings using the guidelines we have enumerated above and provide adequate advanced notification. We are outraged how this situation occurred. The last public notice was issued just prior to the Labor Day weekend only five days prior to the first hearing when obviously most citizens would not even be aware of it or able to attend. The supreme irony is that this radioactive waste is partly a result of our pursuit of nuclear weapons and testing in the State of Nevada. The Nevada Test Site is located on Western Shoshone land, which is considered by Native Americans to be the most bombed nation on Earth.

Sincerely,



Sara Barczak
Safe Energy Director
Georgians for Clean Energy

cc: Lake Barrett, Acting Director
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